

# critical digest

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## This Week

Show-Beat- Jones Beach 6/21. Guy Lombardo presents revival of Hammerstein-Kern musical. With Paul Hartman, Hal LeRoy, David Atkinson.

## Critics Ratings

Annual Variety tabulation of critical toughness finds Kerr, Herald Tribune, sternest of NY aisle-sitter: He viewed 56 shows, liked 22, panned 30 for a rating of .354. Listing of reviewers follows---

Kerr	.354
Hawkins	.396
Coleman	.454
Atkinson	.490
Chapman	.527
McClain	.535
Watts	.541
Variety	.500

## Summer Issues C. D.

Summer theatre tryouts package shows and NY activities will be covered in weekly issues of C. D. Playgoer's Guide will contain special critical ratings of package shows.

## Digests of Current NYC Theatre Reviews

New Faces of '56- Barrymore 6/14. 4 con votes, 3 pro votes filed by NYC critics on Leonard Sillman's new revue. Times, Herald Tribune, Post, World Telegram & Sun aisle-sitters found little to praise in group of 19. Female impersonator T. C. Jones was billed by them as the best talent, and lack of good sketches and songs as the worst fault. Atkinson, Times, thought that one star performer in the show might have made the difference. Kerr, Herald Tribune, found the talent encouraging, but vetoed project because of poor writing. Herridge, Post, panned the entire group, betting that audiences won't see many of these faces again. Heading the pro side, Chapman, News, billed it as a cheerful revue with nice young people, just what this town can use all summer. Coleman, Mirror, found it a furiously fast and funny revue, with T. C. Jones and Franca Baldwin as standouts.

Shangri-La- Winter Garden 6/13. All but 2 of the NYC reviewers panned Fryer-Carr musical version of "Lost Horizon." Hawkins, World Telegram & Sun, and McClain, Journal American, okayed it. Former thought it was a most extraordinarily agreeable evening, while latter enjoyed it as a beautiful, breath-taking production. Both cheered Peter Larkin's sets, co-stars Dennis King and Shirley Yamaguchi, and others in the large cast. The dissenters panned the dull book and equally dull music. Atkinson, Times, listed it as a morality story swamped in production and routines. Complete lack of fun was what Kerr, Herald Tribune, missed the most in the deadly story. News and Mirror men thought show was lovely to look at, but lacking in charm. Herridge, Post, wondered why the musical seemed worth the effort as it ends up as a beautifully dressed bore.

## Summer Package

The Chalk Garden, with Lillian and Dorothy Gish, was approved by Hawkins, World Telegram & Sun, who viewed it at Westport, Conn. Casting the sisters in opposite roles gives it interesting new values. Supporting cast headed by Frances Ingalls was also praised.

The Globe and the Ambassador will return to the legit fold next season. The former has been acquired by Feuer and Martin, William Zeckendorf and Roger Stevens. The entrance will be returned to its former location on West 46th St, and the renovated house will seat 1400. NBC is releasing the latter theatre.

#### Plays

Carmen Jones closed...Six Fingers in a Five Finger Glove opens at Longacre Oct 3...Lil' Abner musical will enter rehearsals in August...Michael Myerberg will present The Ballad of Baby Doe

#### Players

June Roselle replaced Florence Henderson, Fanny...Vivian Blaine will replace Shelley Winters in Hatful of Rain on July 2...James Lee and Grace Raynor have joined The Desk Set...Garson Kanin will stage The Heart's Not Forgotton...Kermit Bloomgarden won the 3rd annual Sam S. Shubert Foundation Award for the outstanding contribution to the NY theatre this season...Robert Whitehead would like to import the entire London cast for his NY production of Separate Tables...Ralph Morgan, age 72, died.

#### Summer Playhouses

Starlight Theatre, Pawling, NY, starts 23rd season June 26...Susan and Stranger by Robert Nathan will debut at Mt. Kisco, NY July 24...Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter will be presented June 23 at Theatre by The Sea, Matunuck, RI...The First Time, a new musical, will be presented at Bucks County, Pa...Modern 800 seat fan shaped playhouse will open next summer in Spring Valley, NY

#### Vaudeville

"Hi Neighbor" a revue salute to Canada will be presented at Radio City Music Hall with Martha Rich, George Sawtelle.

#### Other Broadways

Boston playing host to Teahouse of August Moon and Pajama Game...Chicago viewing The Bad Seed and Joy Ride, revue...Dallas has No Time for Sergeants at State Fair...Detroit has 2nd company of No Time for Sergeants..Los Angeles viewing Anastasia, Silk Stockings, Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter...San Francisco fans seeing Inherit the Wind, Rosalinda, Anniversary Waltz...Damn Yankees stops off in Seattle...Washington, D. C. housing Teahouse of August Moon.

#### Award File

Village Voice, a Greenwich Village, NY, weekly publication, awarded its first annual "Obie" awards to Off Broadway players and theatres. Richard Hayes, Commonweal, Jerry Tallmer, Village Voice, and Earle Hyman were the judges. Julie Bovasso, The Maids, Jason Robards, Jr., and George Voskev, Uncle Vanya, won as the best actress and actors. Jose Quintero, Iceman Cometh, as best director. The Three Penny Opera as best musical. Absalom as the best new play. Peggy McCay, Uncle Vanya as best supporting actress, and Gerald Hiken, Uncle Vanya, as best supporting actor.

Special citations to three Off Broadway theatres were also presented. To the Phoenix for its enterprise in restoring "Mother of All" to popular attention. To Shakespearean Theatre Workshop for its work. To Tempo Playhouse for its tenacity in trying circumstances.





GREEN  
ROOM  
DEPARTMENT

**CRITICS PRO CRITICS...** NYC drama critics think they are doing a satisfactory job, Variety annual survey of aisle-sitters discovered. They reported to trade publication that they feel that as a group they are on a par, as far as work goes, to the celebrated reviewers of the past.

**COLUMN TIPS...** A columbia University student from Texas invested \$30,000 in Shangri-La, reports Winchell... Julie Harris may appear next season on Broadway in Major Barbara, hears Walker.

**GERMAN LEGIT...** All actors in Eastern Germany are fully employed, and entry into the profession is achieved only through academies which cover the whole range of professional entertainment, McClain, Journal American, repeats from an article in British Equity magazine. Salaries start at \$75 per month, top basic pay is \$375, with some receiving special bonuses.

**DRAMA MAIL BOX...** A Times reader fears that someday Rex Harrison and Julie Andrews may return to England. He suggests Congress pass a law forbidding such action... Seats in some of the Broadway theatres are just as hard as some of the seats at Off Broadway houses, complains a C. D. subscriber.

**SHAW DAY...** A Chicago housewife will run the only major tribute in US for the 100th anniversary of the birth of George Bernard Shaw on July 26, Lister, Herald Tribune, reports. Chicago has named the day Bernard Shaw Day and the Irish Consul, the British Information Service and the Adult Education Council of Greater Chicago are backing a promotion organized by Mrs. Lois Solomon who started planning for the day five years ago.

**INTERVIEW HI-LITES...** Running a musical tent in the NY area costs twice as much as usual, Lee Guber, co-producer of Westbury Music Fair told Herridge, Post. Advertising alone runs 4 times higher in NY than in the Philadelphia area. The Long Island operation has cost \$170,000, the tent seats 2000, and the parking lot takes 1000 cars.

PROS & CONS BY TMK

New Faces of '56 presents a dull collection of slightly used faces. With exception of T. C. Jones there is no outstanding talent, sketch or song.

Shangri-La is a beautiful, dull waste of money. The 2 popular songs presented by Harold Lang and Joan Holloway are fun, but the rest is hardly worth the effort.





OFF  
BROADWAY

The Littlest Revue close... The Man With the Golden Arm will close July 1. Week-end matinees priced at \$2... Virginia Daly joined A Doll's House ... Susan Rechtman and Jerome Lawrence are the new leading players in Grand Guignol at Temple Playhouse, 242 E 14... Ruth Lloyd has joined The Maids, Tempo Playhouse, 4 St. Marks Pl, which switches to week-end schedule of 6 40 and 12 midnight performances Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays.

Julius Caesar opens the outdoor Shakespeare Theatre Workshop season at the 2000 seat East River Park Amphitheatre June 29. Performances will be played on Fridays and Saturdays for 3 weeks. Taming of the Shrew and Twelfth Night will be presented latter in the summer on the same playing schedule. The outdoor theatre is located on the East River between the Williamsburg and Manhattan Bridges at the foot of Grand St.

Comrades presented at Actors Playhouse added another con notice. Geor, Variety, feared, Strindberg play moved along at a plod with poor acting. He only liked Mervin Williams performance.

Mrs. Warren's Profession at Davenport was panned by Variety mugg as a poor attempt at a Shaw play. Last minute switch in director was partially to blame. Critic also wondered if there isn't a law about 20 minute intermissions and 8 PM curtains which really start at 8 30 PM.



THEATRE



BOOK  
COMMENTS

"Guide to Great Plays" by Joseph Shipley, New Leader critic, published by Public Affairs Press, is billed by Dash, Women's Wear as one of the most notable books on the theatre to have been written in many years. It is an imperative for the bookshelf of every drama lover in the country. Book, he added, is a monumental work which has called for prodigious research and labor.



THEATRE  
TV

COMMENTS

NBC TV "Holiday", a musical version of Elmer Rice's The Grand Tour, drew two con votes from Adams, Times, and Herm, Variety. Both thought story was too sticky, all adding up for a dull voyage.

CBS TV Victor Borge Show proves again, notes Shepard, Times, that you can't beat humor for getting laughs on TV. Borge shamelessly mugged, punned and cavorted in high and refreshing style.

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